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**DEFENDANTS SENTENCED IN SCHEME TO DEFRAUD THE  
CALIFORNIA EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that the last of three defendants indicted in a scheme to defraud the California Employment Development Department (EDD) of unemployment benefits has been sentenced to federal prison.

VICTORINO PEREZ-LUVIANO, 24, of Merced, was sentenced today by United States Court District Judge Edward J. Garcia to 46 months federal prison and ordered to pay \$169,387 in restitution to EDD. The defendant pleaded guilty to mail fraud on October 15, 2004.

This case is the product of an extensive/joint investigation by EDD, the United States Secret Service, and the United States Postal Inspection Service.

PEREZ-LUVIANO was the last of three defendants to be sentenced in this case. A federal grand jury in February of this year indicted PEREZ-LUVIANO along with co-defendants Misael Pina, 24, of Pittsburg, California, and Nelson Soto, 24, of Antioch, California. Pina was sentenced on September 24, 2004, to 27 months federal prison, and Soto was sentenced on December 10, 2005, to 14 months federal prison. All three defendants are Mexican nationals in the United States illegally.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Matthew Stegman, who prosecuted the case, the defendants defrauded EDD out of \$169,387 by obtaining payroll lists from trashcans and other sources, and then filing fraudulent unemployment claims with EDD over the telephone, posing as individuals who had been laid off from their jobs, using the names and social security numbers obtained from the payroll lists. The unemployment checks would then be sent to post office boxes rented by the three defendants and others.

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